

# Proposed Davis County Fuels Treatments

SALT LAKE RANGER DISTRICT  
SPRING 2005  
WASATCH-CACHE  
NATIONAL FOREST



Example of Aerial Ignition

*Davis County Fuels Projects To Reduce Hazardous Fuels, Enhance Wildlife Habitat And To Provide A Fire Break Along The Davis County Front*

If you would like more information about The Davis County Fuels Project on the Salt Lake Ranger District, Please Visit [www.fs.fed.us/r4/wcnf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/wcnf) or call (801) 733-2660



Example of Hand Ignition With Drip Torch

Prescribed fire and mechanical treatments are tools used by Forest Managers to reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat, or to impact change within a watershed.

In order to restore fire to its natural role in forests and rangeland, we ignite prescribed fires in the spring and fall when weather conditions allow for slow, low intensity burning to protect the soil. Specific management objectives may be to reduce the fuels and/or create a mosaic pattern in the vegetation to create cover, forage, and browse areas for wildlife. Prescribed fire can also mimic naturally occurring fire, enhance native plant species and create diversity in vegetation structure and distribution.

We know that fire is essential to the health of our forest and rangelands. Since conditions in many areas are conducive to large, severe wildland fires, and because so many people now live in or near forest and rangelands, we need fires to burn in a more controlled way. By igniting prescribed fires, we can maximize the chance that they will burn on our terms with acceptable effects.

A prescribed fire only occurs in a “window” when the temperature, humidity, wind speed and fuel moisture are within the prescribed fire plan objectives. When the window is “open” fuels specialists complete a go-no-go checklist to ensure all aspects of the fire can be accomplished. Managers will only ignite prescribed fires when predicted weather and fuel conditions allow for minimized smoke impact on air quality and public health. Prescribed fires can be ignited by hand, using drip torches or by air using helicopters to drop incendiary devices.

In areas where prescribed fire is not an adequate tool, mechanical and manual treatments can be applied. Depending on treatment locations and accessibility, two methods of brush removal can be utilized. Cutting the brush with chain saws and scattering the debris with chippers is one method. The second method is stacking the cut brush into piles to burn in favorable conditions at a later date, preferably in late fall, winter or early spring.

## Davis County Fuels Treatment

Early in 2004, Forest Service wildfire and fuels specialists conducted public meetings in Centerville and Farmington about a proposed project to treat approximately 1,600 acres of oak brush in Steed and Davis Canyons. In April, as the environmental review was nearing completion, the Compton Bench mudslides occurred. Rather than proceed with the treatments that spring, which included a relatively large acreage of prescribed burning, the Forest Service decided to re-examine the potential for mudslides in the Davis and Steed Creek areas. The review lead to the development of a greatly reduced proposal, focused entirely in Davis Canyon. The new proposal avoids the slopes that are the most susceptible to runoff problems.

The Davis Creek treatments include using prescribed fire on about 175 acres of oak brush in two separate units, and hand-thinning about 88 acres in a third unit (see map on reverse side). Units 1 and 2 could be treated as early as late March to mid-April of this year, if conditions are appropriate. Mechanical and manual thinning would likely begin this summer and could extend over several seasons.

Significant work was completed last year along the firebreak road, as heavy concentrations of oak brush were cut and chipped. However, the potential for large-scale wildfire remains a serious concern, especially with the area's frequent down-canyon evening winds. These treatments would help to reduce the possibility that a large wildfire could sweep down the canyon and overrun the firebreak road. Also, the treatments would help to reduce the potential for wildfires spreading into multiple canyons and would help to assure that firefighters could attack future fires from more secure positions.

These treatments are an important step in reducing hazardous fuels near communities at risk and to help reduce the chances of having future catastrophic wildfires along the Wasatch Front in Davis County.



Clearing the Firebreak Road in Davis County



Cleared Portion Along the Firebreak Road

As part of the revised Wasatch-Cache National Forest Management Plan these prescribed burns are the first phases of a multi-year plan that reintroduces fire back into the ecosystem for re-vegetation, to reduce hazardous fuels near communities at risk and to improve wildlife habitat.

The majority of the brush communities in the burn areas are approaching late seral stages due to a lack of natural disturbances. In addition, grazing, fire suppression, and other management practices have changed the forest structure and composition, causing a decline in the ecological health of the forests.

Prescribed fire and mechanical treatment provide for ecosystem maintenance and restoration consistent with land uses and historic fire regimes. Fuels are managed to reduce the risk of damage to private property and to provide for public and firefighter safety by lowering the risk of catastrophic wildfires.



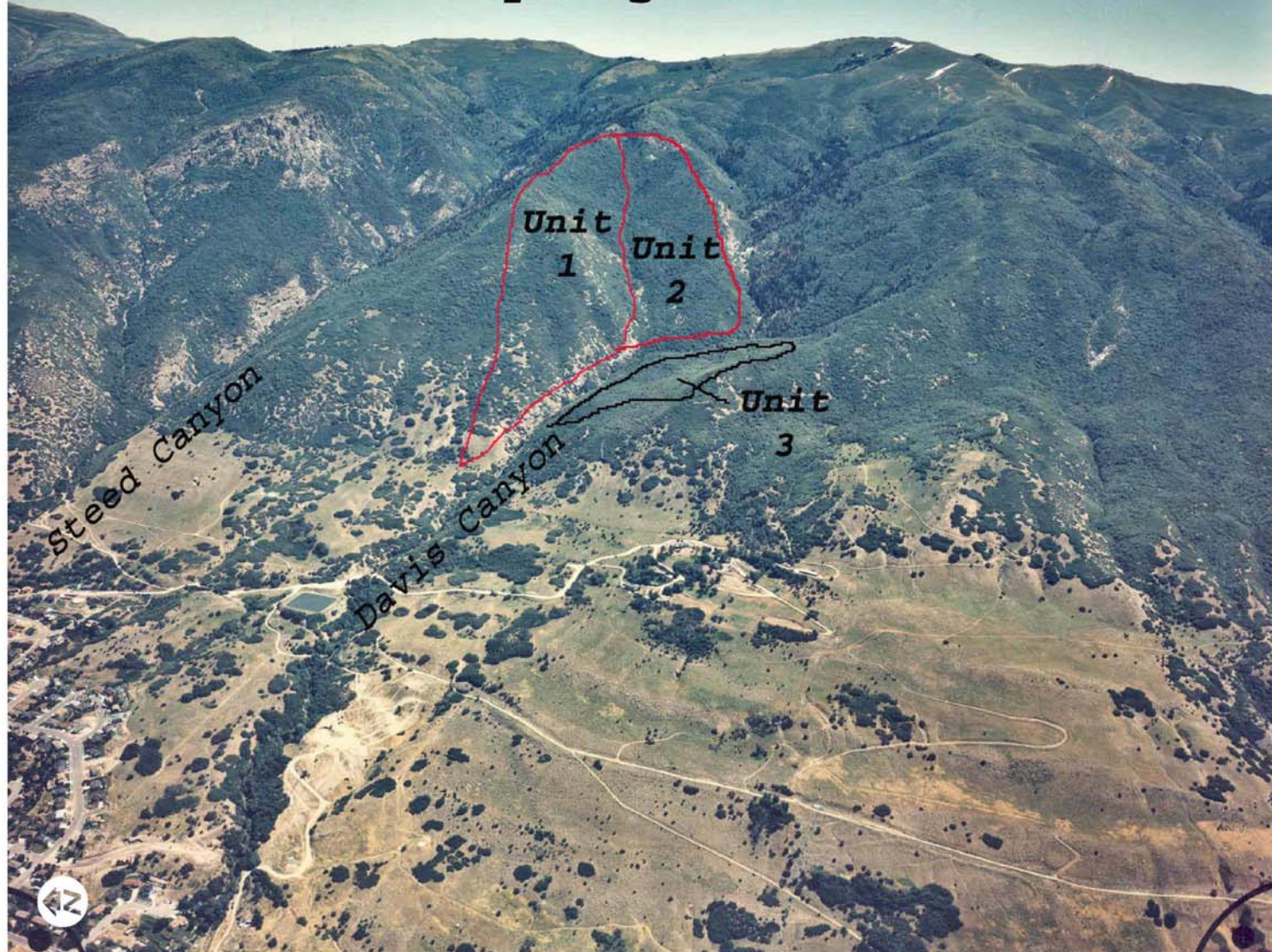
Chipping Operations Firebreak Road 2004

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



**DAVIS COUNTY FUELS TREATMENTS**  
**Spring 2005**



**Wasatch-Cache National Forest**  
**Salt Lake Ranger District**  
**Davis County Fuels Treatment**  
**Spring 2005**

